

Feeding Colostrum Replacers

Rosemarie Cabral, Ph.D. Famo Feeds, Freeport, MN

Colostrum is essential to calf health and nutrition. Through colostrum, the calf receives IgG, fat, lactose, minerals, vitamins, and water. Although colostrum provides the calf's first antibodies against disease, it can also be the source of its first exposure to bacteria and other pathogens. Many serious conditions can be passed from mother to calf through colostrum including *Escherichia coli*, leukosis, and Johne's disease. Exposure to these organisms and diseases early on can be detrimental to the health of the calf and cause significant economic losses.



Why use colostrum replacers?

- Colostrum replacers were designed to be a total replacement for colostrum. The designed use of colostrum replacers was to provide calves with the necessary antibodies for them to thrive when quality maternal colostrum is unavailable or when the dams are carriers for certain diseases transmitted via colostrum. *

Requirements of quality colostrum replacers

- Provide >100 g of IgG/dose
- Needs to not only contain an adequate amount of Ig but also the nutrients necessary for the calf to thrive which include protein, energy, vitamins, and minerals.
- Should be derived from lacteal secretions for optimal IgG uptake

Advantages:

- Removes risk of transfer of disease from cow to calf
- Consistent, quality product
- Quick preparation for feeding at any time of day

Disadvantages:

- Uptake of IgG is lower in colostrum replacers especially when they are serum-derived
- Some products are challenging to mix into a solution
- Expensive

Recommendations

- Mix with a blender. It is quicker and the powder will go into solution more completely
- Use very warm water. This also helps with mixing.
- Prepare immediately before feeding. The colostrum replacer will begin to congeal if allowed to sit out for too long and bacteria can begin growing quickly

* Keep in mind that *inadequate* feeding of colostrum has been linked to reduced growth rates, increased risk of disease and death, increased risk of being culled, and decreased milk production in their first lactation. Feeding large volumes of the mother's colostrum is the preferable way to start a calf, but colostrum replacers may be the next best option when there are extenuating circumstances.



About the Author

Dr. Rosemarie Cabral, is a Ruminant Nutritionist at Famo Feeds in Freeport, MN. She received her M.S. and Ph.D. at the University of New Hampshire in the area of colostrum management for the newborn calf.

Contact Information

Dr. Rosemarie Cabral | 1-800-450-2145 | rcabral@famofeeds.com

UNH Extension Infoline

Ask Questions, Explore Opportunities, Get Ideas. Master Gardener volunteers and home horticulture staff are ready and available to help with topics including gardening, lawns, pests, fruits and vegetables, food safety, and much more. For research-based information you can trust, Ask UNH Extension.

answers@unh.edu

facebook.com/AskUNHExtension

1-877-EXT-GROW (1-877-398-4769)

Monday - Friday | 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

extension.unh.edu

The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer. University of New Hampshire, U.S. Department of Agriculture and N.H. counties cooperating.

